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THE LAND OF BURNS.

SECOND ARTICLE.

IN the 54th number of the Journal appeared an article under this title, in which we commenced a topographical sketch of that part of the county of Ayr which derives interest from the life and poetry of Robert Burns; mixed up with anecdotes of persons and things noticed in his writings. In that article, it may be recollected, we were only able to advert to the district near Alloway Kirk, where the poet was born, and spent the first few years of his life. We now propose to glance at the vale of the Ayr, where he lived from his seventeenth to his twenty-seventh year (1777-1786), and wrote all those poems which first obtained him distinction in the world.

The valley of the Ayr may be described as a large tract of open swelling country, extending from the county town, to which the river gives its name, and where it falls into the sea, to the uplands which divide Ayrshire from Clydesdale. The country has that striking peculiarity observable in the neighbourhood of the Esk at Roslin, and other rivers in Scotland: it is high and level, and preserves one uniform character every where, except on the immediate brink of the river, where in many places are found precipitous and rocky banks, as if the water had worn a chasm for itself, or been directed into one previously formed by some tremendous convulsion of nature. The deep sections of red sandstone thus exposed to the air, shagged with bushes growing from the fissures—the grand downward sweep of old woods which clothes the less rocky banks—the deep black pools of the hermit river, as he steals on pensively and obscurely to the sea—altogether form a tract of scenery which is hardly surpassed by any thing of the same kind in Scotland. Coilsfield, Barskimming, Auchinleck, Ballochmyle, and Catrine, are the names of gentlemen's parks which include the best parts of this fine range.

The principal road through this tract of country is that leading from Ayr to Mauchline, upon the north side of the river, and generally at some distance from its margin. It was by this route that the present writer made his pilgrimage through the valley of the Ayr, and he will accordingly describe the objects he saw in the order in which they are presented to a person travelling in that direction.

Nothing of particular interest occurs for the first seven miles, when at length the pilgrim reaches the village of Tarbolton, so intimately connected with Burns's history. In the neighbourhood of this village is situated the farm of Lochlee, where the poet lived, as a humble denizen of his father's household, from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth year of his age. This, of course, was the clachan to which at that period he resorted for the pleasures of society. He formed here, in 1780, a club of young men, who met monthly for mutual improvement and entertainment, and of which he and his brother poet David Sillar were the leading members: the utmost extent of expenditure on any night was threepence. Here, also, was a lodge of freemasons, which he delighted to attend, and to whom he wrote a farewell, incorporated in his poems. The lodge still exists, and possesses among its records many letters from Burns, some written long after he was locally dissevered from the association, but still breathing an intense interest in its concerns. It was after attending a meeting of this lodge that he wrote his poem entitled "Death and Doctor Hornbook," the object of which was to burlesque the schoolmaster, who had offended him that night in the course of an argument. This individual had become attached to medicine, and having a small

grocery shop, in which among other things he sold the more ordinary kinds of medicine, conceived himself qualified to accompany these with what he called "advice." The satire was nothing more at the time than an expression of the author's gall against a man who had ruffled him a little; and if it had never been published, the revenge could not have been said to have greatly exceeded the offence. On its being given, however, to the world, it produced effects, which, considering the innocent, and perhaps even laudable nature of the schoolmaster's new vocation, must be deplored by every right-thinking person. It overwhelmed him with so much ridicule, that he found it necessary to leave the village, and seek in a more extended scene that obscurity which he could no longer enjoy in Tarbolton. He removed to Glasgow, and became a teacher in the Gorbals, where, it is pleasant to record, he prospered so well during a long course of years, as ultimately to realise a respectable competency. We have been informed by individuals who enjoy his acquaintance, that he is a truly virtuous and amiable man, totally the reverse of what might be presumed from the ungenerous sarcasms of the poet.

Tarbolton lies upon the banks of a small stream denominated Faile Water, and at no great distance may be traced the remains of that monastery to which the poet of the Reformation alludes in his well-known verse—

The friars of Faile ne'er wanted ale,
As long as their neighbors' lasted;
The monks of Melrose made gude kale
On Fridays when they fasted.

In pursuing its way to the Ayr, the Faile passes through the park of Coilsfield—a name which will awaken many recollections in association with Burns. Coilsfield was, in the days of Burns, the seat of Colonel Hugh Montgomery, a cadet of the house of Eglintoun, and who, in 1797, succeeded to that peerage, which his grandson now enjoys. The poet alludes to him, when he says—

— Could I like Montgomery fight,
Or gab like Boswell,
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
And tie some hose well.

The house, which has since been renewed, stood upon a lofty bank, overhanging the Faile, surrounded in every direction by the most beautiful woods. It is a scene which, in any circumstances, would arrest the eye of the passing traveller; but it is needless to say that every other charm sinks beneath that which has been conferred upon it by the history and the genius of Burns.

It was one of the most remarkable gifts of this person, that he could invest any object he took a fancy for, however prosaic in the eyes of other people, with the most exalted interest. At the time of his residence near Mauchline, a girl named Mary Campbell, originally from Campbellton in Argyleshire, served at Coilsfield in the humble capacity of *byreswoman*, or dairymaid. She has been described to us by a surviving fellow-servant as a good-looking, middle-sized young woman, somewhat stout, neat-footed, of a fair complexion, blue eyed, and very slightly marked with small-pox. In the eyes of her compeers, she was simply what is called in Scotland a *trig lass*: in the eyes of Burns, she was an angel. Either before or after being at Coilsfield, she served a year in the house of Mr Gavin Hamilton, the poet's friend at Mauchline; and it is the tradition of that gentleman's family, that Burns's passion for her was the cause of her being discharged. According to the poet himself, after a pretty long trial of the most ardent reciprocal attachment, they met by appointment on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of

the Ayr, where they spent a day in taking a farewell, before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for her intended marriage to Burns. Probably the two lovers did not confine themselves to the banks of the Ayr, but wandered through the woods of Coilsfield, and along the banks of the Faile; for a spreading thorn is pointed out near the house as somehow connected with their story, either as a scene of meeting or of parting; and the poet himself, in his poetical account of the transaction, addresses the scene at large—

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery;
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie,
There summer first unfaulds her robes,
And there they longest tarry,
For there I took my last farewell
Of my sweet Highland Mary.
How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As, underneath the fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The angel hours, on golden wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.
Wi' mony a vow and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender,
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore ourselves asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary.
O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft ha'e kiss'd sae fondly;
And clos'd for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
The heart that lov'd me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

According to another authority, the adieu of these lovers was performed with certain ceremonials, calculated to deepen the impression of even love itself. They stood on each side of a small brook—they laved their hands in the limpid stream—and, holding a Bible between them, pronounced their vows to be faithful to each other. This Bible is or was lately in possession of a surviving sister of Mary, at Ardrossan. Upon the boards of the first volume is inscribed, in Burns's hand-writing—"And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, I am the Lord." *Levit.* chap. xix. v. 12. On the second volume—"Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths." *St Matth.* chap. v. 33. And on a blank leaf of either—"Robert Burns, Moss-giel," with his mason-mark.

The parting was an eternal one. On returning to Greenock on her way to Ayrshire, Mary Campbell died of an inflammatory distemper, and was buried in the churchyard there, where a monument, commemorating her story, was about ten years ago erected to her memory: her mother was then resident in Greenock.

What turn might have been given to the fate of Burns, if he had been united to this amiable though humble person, and thus redeemed in all probability from many subsequent follies, it were vain to speculate. It is to be supposed, however, that he often had occasion afterwards, when "musing on wasted time," and perhaps writhing under a consciousness that the tenor of his life was neither innocent nor profitable, to say with Serjeant Bothwell, in his most touching record of early and unfortunate passion,

Both heaven and earth might now approve me,
If thou hadst lived, and lived to love me.

Other attachments, including many less pure as well as less impassioned, afterwards possessed his breast; but the recollection of "Mary" seems to have ever

remained with him, and even to have recurred more particularly when the consequences of those less worthy attachments were pressing upon him. At the time when one of these was about to drive him into a degraded exile, he composed the following verses, which powerfully express the bitterness of his feelings on the occasion:—

Over the mist-shrouded cliffs of the lone mountain straying,
Where the wild winds of winter incessantly rave,
What woe was winging my heart while intensely surveying
The storm's gloomy path on the breast of the wave?
Ye foam-crested billows, allow me to wail,
Ere ye toss me afar from my loved native shore;
Where the flower which bloom'd sweetest in Colla's green vale,
The pride of my bosom, my Mary's no more.
No more by the banks of the streamlet we'll wander,
And smile at the moon's rimpled face in the wave;
No more shall my arms cling with fondness around her,
For the dewdrops of morning fall cold on her grave.
No more shall the soft thrill of love warm my breast;
I haste with the storm to a far distant shore,
Where, unknown, untam'd, my ashes shall rest,
And joy shall revisit my bosom no more.*

To pursue this affecting tale in the words of Mr Lockhart:—"That noblest of all his ballads, *To Mary in Heaven*, was, it is on all hands admitted, composed by Burns in September 1789 [at Ellisland], on the anniversary of the day on which he heard of the death of his early love. But Mr Cromek has thought fit to dress up the story with circumstances which did not occur. Mrs Burns, the only person who could appeal to personal recollection on this occasion, and whose recollections of all the circumstances connected with the history of her husband's poems are represented as being remarkably distinct and vivid, gives what may at first appear a more prosaic edition of the history. According to her, Burns spent that day, though labouring under a cold, in the usual work of his harvest, and apparently in excellent spirits. But as the twilight deepened, he appeared to grow 'very and about something,' and at length wandered out into the barn-yard, to which his wife, in her anxiety for his health, followed him, entreating him in vain to observe that frost had set in, and to return to the fire-side. On being again and again requested to do so, he always promised compliance, but still remained where he was, striding up and down slowly, and contemplating the sky, which was singularly clear and starry. At last Mrs Burns found him stretched on a mass of straw, with his eyes fixed on a beautiful planet, 'that shone like another moon,' and prevailed on him to come in. He immediately, on entering the house, called for his desk, and wrote, exactly as they now stand, with all the ease of one copying from memory, the sublime and pathetic verses:—

Thou lingering star, with lessening ray,
That lovest to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day,
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy blissful place of rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?
That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace;
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last
Ayr gurgling kins'd his pebbled shore,
Overhung with wild woods thick'ning green:
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn bower,
Twined amorous round the raptur'd scene.
The flowers sprang wanton to be press'd,
The birds sang love on every spray;
Till too, too soon the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.
Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with misty care;
Time but the impression deeper makes
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy blissful place of rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

To wander through these woods of Colisfield, and reflect that, as the residence of rank and affluence, they are as nothing, but derive immortal glory from the attachment of a ploughman to a menial servant; both of whom lived forty years ago, fills the mind with reflections which we would vainly attempt to describe.†

* First published in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, of November 21, 1829; being taken from a manuscript in the possession of Mr Lewis Smith, Lockhart, Aberdeen.

† In a cottage amidst the Colisfield woods lives Hugh Andrew, aged 73, who in Burns's days served Colonel Montgomery in the capacity of whipper-in. We conversed with this man, and obtained from him the above description of Highland Mary, which he was the more likely to give correct, as he "had once a kind of notion of the lass himself." He remembers seeing Burns come one day, in his black-grey home-made clothes and blue rig-and-fur stockings, to be introduced to the lady of Colisfield Montgomery. He was quite well known to Burns, having occasionally to act as a steward in the Tarnish Lodge when the poet was president. Honest Hugh tells, that Burns had him in his eye in the verses of the *Twa Dogs*.

"Our whipper-in, we blisest wunner,
Pair worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than any tenant man.
His hammer has in it the last?"

The honour is not likely to be disputed.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

THE following paper on natural philosophy is abridged from an excellent article in the *Dublin University Magazine*, for August. In the present extraordinary dearth of really good literary articles in our magazines, it is pleasing to discover one which is alike distinguished for the simplicity of its language and the utility of its object:—

"The history of philosophy is one of the most interesting studies of the man of letters. The view of the progress of knowledge, from its earliest recorded development, to its present extended diffusion, offers to the reflecting mind a field of contemplation worthy of traversing. If we compare the feeble efforts of the most ancient philosophers to penetrate the veil of ignorance which then surrounded mankind, with the mighty power of the promoters of knowledge of the present day, we must be struck with the extraordinary progress of the human mind through the different stages of barbarism, semi-civilization, and recent advancement. Let us consider the kind of knowledge acquired by these philosophers on their travels.

Thales, of Miletus, visited Egypt, where he studied geometry, astronomy, and cosmogony. He was the founder of the Ionian sect of philosophers, upon his return to his native place. He appears to have taught the cause of the inequality of days and nights, and the theory of eclipses. He maintained that water is the principle of which all the bodies in the universe are composed—that the world was the work of God, and that God sees the most secret thoughts in the heart of man. It is related that he measured the height of the pyramids of Memphis by the extent of their shadows; and he is considered the first who employed the circumference of a circle in the measurement of angles.

Pythagoras studied geometry among the Egyptians. This science he improved by his subsequent discovery of several important propositions. He is the earliest recorded teacher of the true system of astronomy, and he made many important discoveries in the other physical sciences. He observed many curious phenomena on the surface of the earth, which must have led him to reason on the changes which this surface must have undergone in the lapse of ages. In the 13th book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a number of these observations are mentioned, which are extremely curious, and testify, in a very remarkable manner, the superior mind of the philosopher.

Plato also travelled into the east, where he became versed in the learning of the Persians and the Egyptians. He wrote several works, which treated chiefly of metaphysical subjects. He mingled together his doctrines of theogony and cosmogony, so that it is a difficult matter to separate his peculiar notions of the latter. The passage in his writings most interesting to the modern geologist, is that which treats of the Atlantic, recorded by Plato as a large continent beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and which had sunk under water, thereby giving place to the present Atlantic Ocean. He made many improvements in geometry; to him is ascribed the discovery of the mathematical bodies, called the regular solids. He conceived the world to be a figure shaped like one of these solids, called the dodecahedron.

Of the opinions of Aristotle respecting the formation of the world, we have not any very clear account. He wrote upon a variety of subjects, among which natural history occupied a prominent place. He regarded the matter of the heavens as ingenerate and eternal—that mankind, and all species of animals, have subsisted from everlasting by a perpetual course of generation, without any original beginning or production; and that the earth has for ever been adorned with trees, plants, flowers, minerals, and other productions, as we now see it to be. (Univ. Hist. p. 78.) It is possible that he may have taken the idea of the eternity of the world from Ocellus Lucanus, a disciple of Pythagoras, who is the most ancient asserter of this idea, so different from the opinion of his master.

We thus find that the most eminent ancient philosophers indulged more or less in reveries respecting cosmogony. In studying other branches of learning, they must have been frequently led into considerations of the probable origin of the world which they inhabited, and they endeavoured to frame hypothesis, some of which were very ingenious, but more generally extremely absurd. Occasionally a master-mind, like that of Pythagoras, made an approximation to the truth, which has astonished the learned of later times. Sometimes facts were related in corroboration of these hypotheses—sometimes they were distorted to explain the dreams of philosophic fancy. But among the ancients, the observation of natural facts was not made in a way to benefit science. We find many of the arts and sciences brought by the ancients to a considerable degree of perfection. In architecture, poetry, eloquence, and perhaps in some other branches, they equalled the moderns. The progress made by them in geometry was admirable indeed, and they based that science upon a foundation fitted to bear the splendid superstructure raised by modern ingenuity. But in those branches that required a combination of the perceptive and reasoning powers, their progress was very limited. Chemistry and experimental philosophy are of modern origin; at least what was effected in them by the ancients, or rather what is recorded as having been effected, is very trifling.

In botany, zoology, and mineralogy, a number of detached observations have been recorded in the writings of Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Pliny; but no classification was ever attempted, nor any extended train of reasoning from these facts adopted by the ancient philosophers.

If we turn our attention to the state of knowledge among the Arabians, we shall find that the mathematical sciences were for the most part cultivated by them. They devoted, it is true, some attention to astronomy and to alchemy, but the former being studied for the purpose of contributing to their desire to penetrate the mysteries of fate, was merely a compound of truth and falsehood, that has been denominated astrology, and the latter, ministering to the passions of most men for acquiring wealth, offering a strong temptation to its votaries, but was of no service in furthering the march of mind, although it discovered facts that were afterwards of service to the modern chemist. We may regard the Arabians more as the preservers of ancient science. Many of the inventions ascribed to them have been traced to the Indians, and were received either directly from that nation, or through the medium of the Greek philosophers, whose works were translated into the Arabic language.

The conclusion to which we may arrive from a contemplation of the state of learning in the early and middle ages, is, that geometry was the only science successfully cultivated, and handed down free of any error or absurdity; all the other branches of learning were more or less imbued with mistaken views, arising generally from imperfect data. There seemed to be little respect paid to knowledge acquired from the observations of facts of daily occurrence. Abstruse studies were most esteemed. Mathematics requiring a train of deep thought, and at the same time of correct reasoning, without needing the aid of experiment requisite in physical science, enabled the cultivators to improve without any danger of perversion.

In the study of natural philosophy a knowledge of mathematics is indispensable on the part of the student, if he venture beyond the vestibule. The votary of pure mathematics will be insensibly led to the application of his favourite science for the explanation of some of the phenomena in nature; and if he be successful in solving any of their mysteries, he will be encouraged to pursue still further the research after physical truth. The ancients were thus led to apply their mathematical knowledge. The name of Archimedes is handed down as one of the brightest in ancient times. His discoveries form an important era in the history of science; and they arose from his extensive application of geometry to physics. Before his time there were no correct notions of the theory of mathematics, and he is the first who pointed out the specific gravity of bodies. He is the only one of the ancients that can bear comparison with the moderns as a natural philosopher.

When learning began, after the dark ages, to revive in Europe, the mathematical lore of the ancients was sought after with great avidity. What had been effected by them in the physical sciences received also its due appreciation. Both the truth and the absurdity of their astronomy, mechanics, and other branches, were swallowed without at first being questioned. But as the attention of the early moderns became more directed to scientific investigation, many of the errors of the ancients became manifest. Some of these were speedily corrected, while others, admitting of more discussion, remained for a longer period under the judgment of the new cultivators of knowledge. Every successive age, however, dispelled more or less of these errors. The study of the pure mathematics advanced with rapid strides. Their field was augmented with numberless new discoveries. Their application to physics became every day more general; and the impulse which science had now received carried forward its votaries with a velocity never before known in its progress.

Natural philosophy had now become a science of great importance from the additions made by its early modern cultivators to what was received by them from the ancients. Among the ancients, Archimedes was the first who applied geometry to physics, and thus gave it a double power. Among the first revivers of learning in Europe was Des Cartes, who applied algebra to geometry, and thus put an engine of incalculable power into the hands of the cultivator of natural philosophy. The attention of the learned was now directed to experiment, a method, if investigated, but little appreciated or understood by the ancients. Galileo, by his invention of the telescope, opened as it were the gates of the heavens, into which rushed a host of ardent inquirers after truth. A number of other illustrious men at the same time directed their attention to experiment in the other branches of physical science. The discovery of printing some time before enabled the new acquisitions to knowledge to be widely diffused, and enable one nation to communicate its learning to another with a rapidity never before conceived. The discovery of America not only was a successful experiment on a large scale, but it added another proof to the true system of the world, and directed in a further degree the attention of men to the examination of natural phenomena. The Reformation promoted the freedom of discussion, and enabled the laity to take part in studies, almost previously attended to by the clergy alone. But what contributed in the greatest degree to the improvement

of physical science, was the new path pointed out to its votaries by the illustrious Lord Bacon. His master-mind discovered the causes of error in the philosophy of the ancients, and demonstrated that as long as their mode of reasoning was pursued, it was impossible for the moderns to frame a true system of science. He asked (Playfair's *Dias. Engel. Brit.*), 'Wherein can arise such vagueness and sterility in all the physical systems which have hitherto existed in the world? It is not certainly from any thing in nature itself; for the steadiness and regularity of the laws by which it is governed clearly mark them out as objects of certain and precise knowledge. Neither can it arise from any want of ability in those who have pursued such inquiries, many of whom have been men of the highest talent and genius of the ages in which they lived; and it can therefore arise from nothing else but the perverseness and insufficiency of the methods that have been pursued. Men have sought to make a world from their own conceptions, and to draw from their own minds all the materials which they employed; but if, instead of doing so, they had consulted experience and observation, they would have had facts and not opinions to reason about, and might have ultimately arrived at the knowledge of the laws which govern the material world.'

The opinions of Bacon became gradually appreciated. The calm observation of facts became in every succeeding age more attended to, and natural philosophy based upon actual experiment, and not upon the wild conceptions of the imagination.

The science of chemistry may be said to be one of the offsprings of the Baconian philosophy. It is a branch of physics—the first principles of which depend wholly upon experiment. Its progress testifies, in a remarkable degree, the importance of the inductive method of reasoning. It required a calm and patient examination of the changes produced on bodies by experiment, in order that a sufficient mass of facts might be accumulated to raise it to the rank of a science. It required its cultivators to divest themselves of all prejudices—to view things as they really are, and not to set out with a previous leaning to a particular set of opinions, and to torture the results of their experiment to prop these opinions up. It is impossible it could have become a regular science under the influence of the Aristotelian philosophy. The more men reasoned from facts, the more did chemistry advance; and it now affords one of the most brilliant examples of the happy mode pointed out by Bacon, for the improvement of knowledge.

If we sum up the results of our observations on the progress of knowledge, we shall arrive at the conclusion, that the observation of facts was the very last object attended to in its march through successive ages, at least the calm and unprejudiced examination of facts. The learned of antiquity seemed more inclined to abstruse studies—to studies which required a precision of reasoning, which often testified their extreme ingenuity. If their first principles were correct, so were their conclusions. But that their first principles were, for the most part, erroneous, we have abundant proof, in many instances. In geometry, their first data were correct, being self-evident truths, and their conclusions were therefore just. For a succession of ages, knowledge, derived from observation of the common objects in nature, was looked down upon as unworthy the regard of the philosopher. There was a consequent bar to the progress of physical knowledge.

After the revival of learning in Europe, it was not to be expected that the eyes of men could be all at once opened to the errors of the ancients. Both the truth and falsehood of the ancient philosophy were studied. The human mind was still imbued with prejudice. This, however, gradually wore away—mathematics became more extended—natural philosophy was extended and improved—chemistry was invented. We may trace the gradual progress of real knowledge from the first axioms of geometry, through the more advanced stages of mathematics, through the successive developments of natural philosophy, to a science resting solely upon a careful examination of facts, the science of chemistry.

Natural philosophy opened to man the field of space—it taught him to regard the motion of objects upon a grand scale—it enabled him to assign dimensions to this space, and to measure the relations of motion. Chemistry taught him to view the changes produced on bodies, by motions of their minute component particles, the measurement of which motions eludes our most subtle investigations. Natural philosophy instructed him in the external relations of the bodies in nature—chemistry in the internal. It led him, as it were, into the mind of inanimate matter.

During the last hundred years, the attention paid to an unprejudiced examination of facts has been continually on the increase. Philosophers have entered upon their investigations without bias to any particular opinions. Instead of commencing their researches by laying down a favourite hypothesis, and then distorting facts to accord with it, they commenced with an impartial examination of the facts themselves, and, following the suggestions of Bacon, they framed their theory by the inductive method of reasoning. By not attending to the advice of Bacon, men were inclined to imagine circumstances which have no existence in reality. They beheld nature through a medium that rarely presented her in her true form. So long as the field of physical science was limited, the liability to

view nature in this manner continued; but as discovery followed discovery, the disposition to prejudice became more and more removed. For a long period men adhered to certain dogmas that had been handed down through a succession of ages, and finding it difficult to reconcile many facts in nature with these dogmas, they had recourse to hypothesis, the frequent absurdity of which paved the way to the exploding of erroneous principles, and dispelled the illusion, although supported by the authority of antiquity. Knowledge derived from poets, spreading far and wide, carried with it the examples of its own importance. The arts of life received incalculable improvements; they, in return, aided science. They formed the passage from one branch to another—they were the illustrators of theory, by showing its practical application. The ancient philosopher would have disdained to lend his aid to the agriculturist, the mechanist, or the navigator. The modern man of science regards, as his proudest boast, the improvements given by him to the arts, thereby rendering man little inferior in power to the deities of the ancients.

It seems, indeed, strange that the impartial examination of facts is the result of a highly improved state of scientific knowledge. But so it is. It is only within a comparatively recent period that the point has been reached by the human mind. It has been often remarked, that the farther we advance in knowledge, the more deeply are we impressed with a sense of our own ignorance. Although this may not be exactly true, still we may acknowledge that we are less confident in broaching any new theory, in proportion to the advance of the march of intellect. When our opinions can be submitted to the test of an appeal to facts, we are more cautious in stating these opinions. It is our province to study the facts attentively, so that we may not be found in the wrong.

Geometry teaches us the relations of dimension as conceived in the human mind, but which, in the abstract, has no real existence. Natural philosophy treats of the relations of existing bodies, viewed in a state of motion. Chemistry informs us of the changes produced in the bodies themselves. Mathematics, natural philosophy, and chemistry, frequently view conditions which have no existence in nature.

THE STRANGER.*

HODNET is a village in Shropshire. Like all other villages in Shropshire, or any where else, it consists principally of one long street, with a good number of detached houses scattered here and there in its vicinity. The street is on a slight declivity, on the sunny side of what in England they call a hill. It contains the shops of three butchers, five grocers, two bakers, and one apothecary. On the right hand, as you go south, is that very excellent inn, the Blue Boar; and on the left, nearly opposite, is the public hall, in which all sorts of meetings are held, and which is alternately converted into a dancing-school, a theatre, a Methodist chapel, a ball-room, an auction-room, an exhibition-room, or any other kind of room that may be wanted. The church is a little further off, and the parsonage is, as usual, a white house surrounded with trees, at one end of the village. Hodnet is moreover the market-town of the shire, and stands in rather a populous district; so that, though of small dimensions itself, it is the rallying place, on any extraordinary occasion, of a pretty numerous population.

One evening in February, the mail from London stopped at the Blue Boar, and a gentleman wrapped in a travelling cloak came out. The guard handed him a small portmanteau, and the mail drove on. The stranger entered the inn, was shown into a parlour, and desired that the landlord and a bottle of wine should be sent to him. The order was speedily obeyed; the wine was set upon the table, and Gilbert Cherryripe himself was the person who set it there. Gilbert next proceeded to rouse the slumbering fire, remarking, with a sort of comfortable look and tone, that it was a cold raw night. His guest assented with a nod. "You call this village Hodnet, do you not?" said he, inquiringly. "Yes, sir, this is the town of Hodnet" (Mr. Cherryripe did not like the term village); "and a prettier little place is not to be found in England." "So I have heard; and as you are not upon any of the great roads, I believe you have the reputation of being a primitive and unsophisticated race." "Primitive and sophisticated did you say, sir? Why, as to that I cannot exactly speak; but, if there is no harm in it, I dare say we are. But you see, sir, I am a vintner, and don't trouble my head much about these matters." "So much the better," said the stranger, smiling. "You and I shall become better friends; I may stay with you for some weeks, perhaps months. In the meantime, get me something comfortable for supper, and desire your wife to look after my bed-room."

Mr. Cherryripe made one of his profoundest bows, and descended to the kitchen, inspired with the dearest respect for his unexpected guest.

Next day was Sunday. The bells of the village church had just finished ringing, when the stranger walked up the aisle, and entered, as if at random, a pew which happened to be vacant. Instantly every eye was turned towards him, for a new face was too important an object in Hodnet to be left unnoticed. "Who is he?" "When did he come?" "With

whom does he stay?" "How long will he be here?" "How old may he be?" "Do you think he is handsome?" These and a thousand other questions flew about in whispers from tongue to tongue, whilst the unconscious object of all this interest cast his eyes calmly, and yet penetratingly, over the congregation. Nor was it altogether to be wondered at that his appearance had caused a sensation among the good people of Hodnet, for he was not the kind of person whom one meets with every day. There was something both in his face and figure that distinguished him from the crowd. You could not look upon him once, and then turn away with indifference. When the service was over, our hero walked out alone, and shut himself up for the rest of the day in his parlour at the Blue Boar. But speculation was busily at work, and at more than one tea-table that evening in Hodnet, conjectures were poured out with the tea, and swallowed with the toast.

A few days elapsed, and the stranger was almost forgotten; for there was to be a subscription assembly in Hodnet, which engrossed entirely the minds of men. It was one of the most important events that had happened for at least a century. Such doings had never been known before. All the preparations which Captain Parry made for going to the north pole, were a mere joke to the preparations made by those who intended to go to the Hodnet assembly. At length the great, the important night arrived. The three professional fiddlers of the village were elevated on a table at one end of the hall, and everybody pronounced it the very model of an orchestra. The candles (neither the oil nor the coal gas company had as yet penetrated so far as Hodnet) were tastefully arranged, and regularly snuffed. The floor was admirably chalked by a travelling sign-painter, engaged for the purpose; and the refreshments in an adjoining room, consisting of negus, apples, oranges, cold roast-beef, porter, and biscuits, were under the immediate superintendence of our very excellent friend, Mr. Gilbert Cherryripe. At nine o'clock, which was considered a fashionable hour, the hall was nearly full, and the first country dance (quadrilles had not as yet poisoned the peace and stirred up all the bad passions of Hodnet) was commenced by the eldest son and presumptive heir of old Squire Thoroughbred, who conducted gracefully through its mazes the chosen divinity of his heart, Miss Wilhelmina Bounner, only daughter of Tobias Bounner, Esq., justice of peace in the county of Shropshire.

Enjoyment was at its height, and the three professional fiddlers had put a spirit of life into all things, when suddenly one might perceive that the merriment was for a moment checked, whilst a more than usual bustle pervaded the room. The stranger had entered it; and there was something so different in his looks and manner from those of any of the other male creatures, that every body surveyed him with renewed curiosity, which was at first slightly tinged with awe. "Who can he be?" was the question that instantaneously started up like a crocus in many a rubbing bosom. "He knows nobody, and nobody knows him; surely he will never think of asking any body to dance. We ought to be upon our guard, I assure you."

For a long time the stranger stood aloof from the dancers in a corner by himself, and people were almost beginning to forget his presence. But he was not idle; he was observing attentively every group, and every individual that passed before him. Judging by the various expressions that came over his countenance, one would have thought that he could read character at a single glance—that his perceptions were similar to intuitions. Truth obliges me to confess, that it was not with a very favourable eye that he regarded the great majority of the inhabitants of Hodnet and its neighbourhood. Probably they did not exactly come up to his expectations; but what these expectations were, it is difficult to conceive.

At length, however, something like a change seemed to come over the spirit of his dreams. His eye fell on Emily Sommers, and appeared so rest where it fell with no small degree of pleasure. No wonder. Emily was not what is generally styled beautiful; but there was a sweetness, a modesty, a gentleness about her, that charmed the more the longer it was observed. She was the only child of a widowed mother. Her father had died many a year ago in battle; and the pension of an officer's widow was all the fortune he had left them. But nature had bestowed riches of a more valuable kind than those which fortune had denied. I wish I could describe Emily Sommers; but I shall not attempt it. She was one of those whose virtues are hid from the blaze of the world, only to be the more appreciated by those who can understand them. Without her, the winter fire-side, or the summer evening walk, is destitute of pleasure. Her winning smiles, her unclouded temper, her affectionate gentleness, must throw their hallowed influence over the scenes where her spirit presides, unconscious of its power, else they become uninteresting and desolate.

It was to Emily Sommers that the stranger first spoke. He walked right across the room, and asked her to dance with him. Emily had never seen him before; but concluding that he had come there with some of her friends, and little acquainted with the rules of etiquette, she immediately, with a frank artlessness, smiled an acceptance of his request. Just at that moment, young Squire Thoroughbred came bustling towards her; but observing her hand already in that of the stranger, he looked somewhat wrathfully

* This story is an amplification, by Mr. H. G. Bell, of an anecdote told by Mr. Hazlitt, and which is said to have had a foundation in real life.

at the unknown, and said, with much dignity, "I, sir, intended to have been Miss Sommers's partner." The stranger fixed his dark eye upon the squire, a slight smile curled on his lip, and, without answering, he passed on with his partner, and took his place in the dance. The squire stood stock-still for a moment, feeling as if he had just experienced a slight shock of electricity. When he recovered, he walked quietly away in search of Miss Wilhelmina Bouncer.

It was the custom in Hodnet for the gentlemen to employ the morning of the succeeding day in paying their respects to the ladies with whom they had danced on the previous evening. At these visits all the remarkable events of the ball were of course talked over. Criticisms were made upon the different dresses, commentaries were offered on the various modes of dancing, &c. We make no doubt that all this chit-chat was very interesting to the parties engaged in it; but our attention is more particularly devoted to the "odd-looking man" already spoken of.

It is most true that he did leave the public hall of Hodnet with Mrs and Miss Sommers, and true that he escorted them home: Nay, it is also true that he won so much upon their favour, that, on his requesting permission to wait upon them next day, it was without much difficulty obtained. This was surely very imprudent in Mrs Sommers, and every body said it was very imprudent. "What! admit as a visitor in her family a person whom she had never seen in her life before, and who, for any thing she knew, might be a swindler or a Jew! There was never any thing so preposterous—a woman, too, of Mrs Sommers's judgment and propriety! It was very—very strange." But whether it was very strange or not, the fact is, that the stranger soon spent most of his time at Violet Cottage; and what is perhaps no less wonderful, notwithstanding his apparent intimacy, he remained nearly as much a stranger to its inmates as ever. His name, they had ascertained, was Burleigh—Frederick Burleigh; that he was probably upwards of eight-and-twenty, and that, if he had ever belonged to any profession, it must have been that of arms. But farther they knew not. Mrs Sommers, however, who to a well cultivated mind added a considerable experience of the world, did not take long to discover that their new friend was, in every sense of the word, a man whose habits and manners entitled him to the name and rank of a gentleman; and she thought, too, that she saw in him, after a short intercourse, many of those nobler qualities which raise the individual to a high and well-merited rank among his species. As for Emily, she loved his society she scarcely knew why; yet, when she endeavoured to discover the cause, she found it no difficult matter to convince herself that there was something about him so infinitely superior to all the men she had ever seen, that she was only obeying the dictates of reason in admiring and esteeming him.

Her admiration and esteem continued to increase in proportion as she became better acquainted with him, and the sentiments seemed to be mutual. He now spent his time almost continually in her society, and it never hung heavy on their hands. The stranger was fond of music, and Emily, besides being mistress of her instrument, possessed naturally a fine voice. Neither did she sing and play unrewarded; Burleigh taught her the most enchanting of all modern languages—the language of Petrarch and Tasso; and being well versed in the use of the pencil, showed her how to give to her landscapes a richer finish and a bolder effect. Then they read together; and as they looked with a smile into each other's countenances, the fascinating pages of fiction seemed to acquire a tenfold interest. These were evenings of calm but deep happiness—long, long to be remembered.

Spring flew rapidly on. March, with her winds and her clouds, passed away; April, with her showers and her sunshine, lingered no longer; and May came smiling up the blue sky, scattering her roses over the green surface of creation. The stranger entered one evening, before sunset, the little garden that surrounded Violet Cottage. Emily saw him from the window, and came out to meet him. She held in her hand an open letter. "It is from my cousin Henry," said she. "His regiment has returned from France, and he is to be with us to-morrow or next day. We shall be so glad to see him! You have often heard us talk of Henry?—he and I were playmates when we were children; and though it is a long time since we parted, I am sure I should know him again among a hundred." "Indeed!" said the stranger, almost starting; "you must have loved him very much, and very constantly too." "O yes! I loved him as a brother." Burleigh breathed more easily. "I am sure you will love him too," Emily added. "Every body whom you love, and who loves you, I also must love, Miss Sommers. But your cousin I shall not at present see. I must leave Hodnet to-morrow." "To-morrow! Leave Hodnet to-morrow!" Emily grew very pale, and leaned for support upon a sun-dial, near which they were standing. "Good heavens! that emotion—can it be possible! Miss Sommers—Emily—is it for me you are thus grieved?" "It is so sudden," said Emily, "so unexpected; are you never to return again—are we never to see you more?" "Do you wish me to return, do you wish to see me again?" "Oh! how can you ask it?" "Emily, I have been known to you under a cloud of mystery—a solitary being, without a friend or acquaintance in the world—an out-

cast apparently from society—either sinned against or sinning—without fortune, without pretensions;—and with all these disadvantages to contend with, how can I suppose that I am indebted to any thing but your pity for the kindness which you have shown to me?" "Pity! pity you! O Frederick! do not wrong yourself thus. No! though you were a thousand times less worthy than I know you are, I should not pity, I should ——" She stopped confused, a deep blush spread over her face, she burst into tears, and would have sunk to the ground had not her lover caught her in his arms. "Think of me thus," he whispered, "till we meet again, and we may both be happy." "O! I will think of thee thus for ever!" They had reached the door of the cottage. "God bless you, Emily," said the stranger; "I dare not see Mrs Sommers; tell her of my departure, but tell her that ere autumn has faded into winter, I shall again be here. Farewell, dearest, farewell." She felt upon her cheek a hot and hurried kiss; and when she ventured to look round, he was gone.

Henry arrived next day, but there was a gloom upon the spirits of both mother and daughter, which it took some time to dispel. Mrs Sommers felt for Emily more than for herself. She now perceived that her child's future happiness depended more upon the honour of the stranger than she had hitherto been aware, and she trembled to think of the probability, that in the busy world he might soon forget the very existence of such a place as Hodnet, or any of its inhabitants. Emily entertained better hopes, but they were the result probably of the sanguine and unsuspicious temperament of youth. Her cousin, meanwhile, exerted himself to the utmost to render himself agreeable. He was a young, frank, handsome soldier, who had leapt into the very middle of many a lady's heart—red coat, sword, epaulette-belt, cocked hat, feathers, and all. But he was not destined to leap into Emily's. She had inclosed it within too strong a line of circumvallation. After a three months' siege, it was impregnable. So Henry, who really loved his cousin next to his king and country, thinking it folly to endanger his peace and waste his time any longer, called for his horse one morning, shook Emily warmly by the hand, then mounted, and rode away.

Autumn came; the leaves grew red, brown, yellow, and purple; then dropped from the high branches, and lay rustling in heaps upon the path below. The last roses withered. The last lingering wain conveyed from the fields their golden treasure. The days were bright, clear, calm, and chill; the nights were full of stars and dew, and the dew, ere morning, was changed into silver hoar-frost. The robin hopped across the garden walks, and candles were set upon the table before the tea-urn. But the stranger came not. Darker days and longer nights succeeded. Winter burst upon the earth. Storms went careering through the firmament; the forests were stripped of their foliage, and the fields had lost their verdure. But still the stranger came not. Then the lustre of Emily's eye grew dim; but yet she smiled, and looked as if she would have made herself believe that there was hope.

And so there was; for the mail once more stopped at the Blue Boar; a gentleman wrapped in a travelling cloak once more came out of it; and Mr Gilbert Cherryripe once more poked the fire for him in his best parlour. Burleigh did come back.

I shall not describe their meeting, nor inquire whether Emily's eye was long without its lustre. But there was still another trial to be made. Would she marry him? "My family," said he, "is respectable, and as it is not wealth we seek, I have an independence, at least equal I should hope to our wishes; but any thing else which you may think mysterious about me I cannot unravel until you are indissolubly mine." It was a point of no slight difficulty; Emily entrusted its decision entirely to her mother. Her mother saw that the stranger was inflexible in his purpose, and she saw also that her child's happiness was inextricably linked with him. What could she do? It had been better perhaps they had never known him; but knowing him, and thinking of him as they did, there was but one alternative—the risk must be run.

It was run. They were married in Hodnet; and immediately after the ceremony they stepped into a carriage, and drove away, nobody knew whither. We must not infringe upon the sacred happiness of such a ride, upon such an occasion, by allowing our profane thoughts to dwell upon it. It is enough for us to mention, that towards twilight they came in sight of a magnificent Gothic mansion, situated in the midst of extensive and noble parks. Emily expressed her admiration of its appearance; and her young husband, gazing on her with impassioned delight, exclaimed, "Emily, it is thine! My mind was imbued with erroneous impressions of women; I had been courted and deceived by them. I believed that their affections were to be won only by flattering their vanity, or dazzling their ambition. I was resolved, that unless I were loved for myself, I should never be loved at all. I travelled through the country incognito; I came to Hodnet, and saw you. I have tried you in every way, and found you true. It was I, and not my fortune, that you married; but both are thine. We are now stopping at Burleigh House; your husband is Frederick Augustus Burleigh,* Earl of Exeter, and you, my Emily, are his Countess!"

* The author appears to have here forgotten that the family name of the Earl of Exeter is Cecil—Burleigh being the former and certainly most honoured title of the house.—Ed.

[We would consider ourselves as abusing the trust reposed in our work, as a medium of innocent amusement and moral instruction, if we failed to point out to our young readers of the gentler sex the extreme danger of the conduct attributed to Emily Sommers in this clever tale. Such conduct might in her instance be crowned with happiness and grandeur; but it was highly blameable in principle, and might have been attended with the most opposite consequences—nay, it is probable that for one instance of such conduct leading to happiness, there are ninety-nine where it must be attended with the utter wreck of the individual guilty of it. In such a state of society as ours, there can be no safe principle, except that every man aiming at our acquaintance must be introduced to us by some person we already know, who becomes a guarantee, as it were, for the propriety of his behaviour and the honour of his views. Without this, we never can be sure that the individual addressing us is not a designing adventurer, who would think nothing of making our happiness his sport, or who aims at his own aggrandisement, by the disgraceful means of inveigling a woman above his own rank into matrimony. Many good-natured people habitually neglect this rule, and we have known numerous instances of such neglect being followed by the most disastrous events. Some years ago, a lady permitted one of her daughters to form an acquaintance with an individual who seemed to lead the life of a gentleman in Edinburgh. His apparent rank was greater than that of the young lady; and it was accordingly looked upon as a grand match when she secured him as a husband. Lamentable delusion! The man turned out in a few months to be a common swindler! He was arrested and committed to jail; and it was not till his death some years after, nor till he had overwhelmed his wife and her connections with shame and vexation unutterable, that she was relieved from him. There were even circumstances in this case more painful than these, but delicacy forbids our adverting to them. We recollect two other cases, at this moment, in which young ladies of the greatest merit, and who might have confidently looked forward to a long life of honour and comfort as the wives of respectable men, were lost—utterly destroyed—by their imprudence in marrying a man to whom they were not introduced. No doubt, if we were to tax our memories, we could recollect many more; but every reader of the least experience in the world will recollect his own instances, and we need not therefore seek to extend the catalogue. We content ourselves with pronouncing emphatically, that, for a young lady to admit the addresses of an unknown youth, however fascinating his manners, or noble his air, is just wilfully to rush upon the almost certain chance of utter misery for life.]

PEEPS FROM A WINDOW.

WHEN I was a student at the College of Edinburgh, I occupied an apartment in the southern division of the city, where many individuals in the same circumstances with myself, and many families in the lower walks of life, are accustomed to reside. My accommodations were humble, but they were suited to my fortune; and, with the world opening and brightening before me, I did not then much regard the want of those comforts which are afterwards found so necessary. Nor was the place without some real charms. From my window I commanded a view of one of the most august natural scenes any where to be met with—the rocky front of Salisbury Crags, at the bottom of which reposed a deserted palace, the seat of the most endeared historical recollections, and beside which I have often walked for hours with inexpressible pleasure, as if to be merely beneath the walls of Holyrood were the enjoyment of a romance. Then, on the fair spring evenings, when I could sit with my window open, it was delightful to hear the troops of little girls playing at their metrical games in some of the neighbouring courts, sent out by the first burst of the fair weather, like so many ephemera, to enjoy a brief sport in what is always so precious a thing in the midst of a large city, the open air, and causing the lofty walls around them to resound with their sweet voices, as they lifted up "Janet Jo," or the Merry-matanzie, or "We are three brethren come from Spain," which last I have always deemed to be the final puerilised form of some antique *lai*, that once was sung in hall before the noble and the fair.*

* The reader, we make almost sure, will be pleased with the verses of this operatic game, which we will here write down from recollection. In the first place, one range of girls take their station at a wall, while another, twining their arms together behind their backs, commence moving backwards and forwards to the measure of the music, as they sing:

We are three brethren come from Spain,
All in French garlands;
We are come to court your daughter Jean,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

This is sung to a very pretty air in advance, and, at the conclusion, the little row retreat at the same measured pace, while the wall-stationed party sing:

In the course of one particular winter, I found a strange and hardly proper source of amusement for occasional leisure minutes, in inspecting the proceedings of a family, whose windows, owing to an angularity in two streets, approached near to mine, and whose rooms I could survey from my own somewhat elevated situation, without their being able to see mine, or likely to observe what I was about. Had the case been an ordinary one, I do not think I would have spent a minute on such a business as this; but there was something in the family which, little as I saw of it, very speedily interested me. The man seemed merely a common artisan—I should not wonder that he belonged to that trade which mankind have so foolishly agreed to laugh at, the tailors; or perhaps he was a shoemaker. No matter. It was evident, from the hours he kept, that he was a man who won weekly wages at some ordinary employment. His wife was a neat, decent-looking woman, apparently from the country; and they had one lovely infant, which even the confined air of the city had not deprived of its radiant cheeks and sunny smiles. It was delightful to observe the honest artisan, whenever he came home, immediately get hold of his darling child, and coax and prattle with it on his knee. His habits seemed all to be of a laudable and even interesting description. It was evident he spent none of his leisure time any where but in the society—and what more fitting?—of his wife and infant. On the outside of his windows, which had a pretty clear exposure to the south, he had boxes containing a small mimic garden, and he was frequently engaged in dressing these little spots and training the flowers, as if, in so doing, he found there was still a link between himself and physical nature. He had also a blackbird, which hung in a cage on the outside, and in the evenings made all the neighbourhood vocal with "Over the water to Charlie." These things were but trivial fragments of the country, its scenes, and sounds; but they were all, I doubt not, that could be had in the present state of his circumstances; and, to a mind of any reach of idea, they would always be sufficient to awaken associations of the more extensive ranges of natural objects, to which he had been perhaps accustomed in other years, and which he looked back to with the ceaseless regret of a city-banished lover of nature. He had also a German flute, which on some evenings he would play at an open window; and I am free to confess that I have rarely since been so truly touched by any music. His favourite tunes were the gentle pastoral melodies of Scotland—Tweedside, Cowdenknowes, the Bush aboon Traquair, and so forth—all of which had no less the charm of association to me than they could have to the performer, for I too was an exile from the scenes which those airs so effectually consecrate in the

hearts of all connected with them. What, however, was the most pleasing trait of this evidently amiable and right-spirited man, was, that, at a certain hour, he invariably opened a large Bible on his table, and appeared to give himself and his household up for a time to religious meditation. There was altogether in this man exactly that range of tastes and habits which are sometimes found adorning humble life in the rural districts of Scotland, but which are unfortunately found so much more rarely amidst the huge masses of a city population.* I was so pleased with the man—his modest frugal household, his fondness for his child, his music, his gardening, and his sobriety—that, from an idle and impertinent gazer, I became mentally his zealous friend, and there was nothing in my power I would not have done to testify that friendship.

A deep gloom at length came over my happy picture. My worthy friend, I saw, had become ill. His infant was no more dandled on his knee at the window. His flute was no more heard in the court. The blackbird was taken in, and silenced in some manner. His windows were deeply screened, and I could see no more. For a considerable time this continued, till, getting somewhat anxious, I requested my landlady, decent Mrs Nichol, to make some inquiries among the neighbours respecting my unknown friend. I learned that he had been seized by a lingering and dangerous distemper, which prevented him from working any, and was likely to be attended with great embarrassment in more ways than one. Mrs Nichol amply confirmed the good impression I had taken of the man. He was an active and sober tradesman, and a perfect example in the neighbourhood, though no one could be farther than he from all interference with those around him. By and bye, he became a little better, as it was thought, and began to appear, in the habiliments of a sick chamber, at the window, where I saw him smiling upon the infant which smiled upon his knee, but evidently unable to give it the customary sport. Sometimes he would have the Bible open on the table, and his wife sitting fondly and reverently at his feet; a group to my feelings the most lovely, the most tender and melancholy—melancholy yet pleasing—that I thought I had ever seen. It was truly astonishing what a poor man could be—how amiable and noble a being!—how near, I might almost say, to the angelic! The grosser elements of life seemed here refined away; and this humble and distressed tradesman shone out in my eyes as something far above even the more elevated classes of his fellow-mortals.

The end of the college session soon after arrived, when I had to return to my native home at a considerable distance in — shire. I could not leave my lodgings without a feeling of deep anxiety respecting this excellent family, for the life of the sick man was declared to be in great danger, and ere long, I reflected, the virtues of this humble scene may be swept from their place, and be heard of no more. The interest I took in the sick man and his concerns would have been declared by many persons to be a mere freak of fancy; but I would fain hope that it was only the impression which goodness is naturally calculated to make

* Private worship was formerly an almost universal practice in Scotland, in cities as well as in the country. In the former it is now hardly known, while in the rural districts, where national habits of all kinds, good and bad, are sure to be longest retained, it is rapidly going out of fashion. Every body will recollect the beautiful description of the ceremony in Burns's *Cottar's Saturday Night*: yet, beautiful as that description is, I question if it possesses a charm superior to a little anecdote, which has been related to me by a lady, respecting the performance of this domestic solemnity in one of the meanest suburbs of this large city. In this lady's younger days, her family used to pay some attentions to a very old and very poor couple, who lived in a back court at Fountainbridge, and whose means of subsistence were of the humblest and most precarious kind. They kept two or three hens, whose eggs, sold in the market, procured for them the only money they ever at any time saw. Then Janet could occasionally make herself useful among her poor neighbours, and from them, as well as from some persons in better condition, with whom she kept up an acquaintance, would occasionally procure small supplies of victuals. For many years towards the close of her life, this poor woman was quite blind; nevertheless, it was curious to see her still continuing to patch her husband's clothes—which, on inquiry, she said she did "by rule of thumb"—and also to perform little servile offices for the gaining of a livelihood. Every night, old John performed what he called *family worship*, raising, with his thin tremulous voice, a psalm, which even the addition of Janet's shrill treble could hardly render audible in the back-court into which their windows looked. The most touching thing of all was, that, after Janet's death, John still kept up his custom; and, according to our informant, hardly any thing could have been more interesting than to listen for a moment in passing to the solitary devotions of this widowed, helpless, and abject creature, whose thready notes seemed the last expiring sighs of attenuated humanity.

upon a heart of the medium correctness of feeling, when truly studied and observed.

During the ensuing summer, though deeply engaged with my books, and diverted by other objects and amusements, I cast many a thought of kindness back to the amiable household in Edinburgh, but had no opportunity of learning the fate of its master. It was therefore with a burst of joyful feeling, such as has attended few events in my life, that, in returning in November to my wonted lodgings, and hurrying to take a survey of my tradesman's windows, I saw him sitting, as after dinner, dandling his child with the same glee as before his illness, while his wife was bustling gaily about her domestic duties, and the blackbird at the window was whistling "Over the water to Charlie" as vociferously as ever.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

JOHN GALT.

THIS individual, the author of the *Ayrshire Legatees*, *Lawrie Todd*, and a number of other popular works of fiction, has just published, in two volumes octavo, an account of his own life, bringing it down to the present period, when he is confined to bed with paralysis, and hopeless of ever again appearing in an active career. We propose to lay an abridgement of Mr Galt's book before our readers, as we conceive that the life of this ingenious, and in many respects unfortunate gentleman, is one from which several instructive views may be derived.

Mr Galt was born at Irvine, in Ayrshire, May 2, 1779, being apparently the eldest son of a person engaged in mercantile pursuits. He gives the following description of his parents, which might be in some measure repeated by many men of literary celebrity: "My father was one of the best, as he was one of the handsomest of men, with only passable ability, in which, however, probity was predominant. My mother was, however, a very singular person; possessing a masculine strength of character, with great natural humour, and a keen perception of the ridiculous in others. In her prime, as I would call it, she indulged in queer metaphorical expressions, exceedingly forcible and original. In latter life, this grew so much into a habit, that her talk to strangers must have often seemed fantastical. The rich ore of common sense, however, which pervaded her observations, was always remarkable, and frequently extorted an instantaneous assent to her opinions, while they provoked irresistible laughter." He spent his first ten or eleven years at Irvine, and there received the rudiments of his education. Being a sickly boy, he became addicted to study, and he used to take great pleasure in hearing tales of foreign adventure from any one who could relate such to him. In his eleventh year, the family removed to Greenock, where he pursued his studies at the public school, under Mr Colin Lamont, and prosecuted still farther his taste for reading, which was much facilitated by an excellent public library to which he had access. He also manifested a turn for mechanics, which, joined to a taste for music, prompted him to attempt the construction of a small piano-forte or hurdy-gurdy, and likewise an Eolian harp. In these early years he composed some pieces of music, one or two of which became popular. What gives a more striking proof of the early development of his reflective powers, is, that he conceived the idea of several local improvements of great magnitude and importance, some of which have since taken place.

He formed an intimacy with a young man of taste and talent, Mr James Park, who appears to have been of great service to him. The two youths cultivated the belles lettres together, and mutually criticised each other's productions. It does not appear that Mr Galt distinguished himself at school: he was thought, even by his mother, to be a dull and sleepy boy, which was in a great measure owing to the state of his health, which did not become good till he reached manhood. In due time he entered the counting-room of Messrs James Miller and Company, in order to learn the mercantile profession, and here he seems to have continued for several years. A circumstance much to his praise falls to be noticed at this period of his life. His father had intended to leave his mother independent; but, owing to some informality, on the death of the old gentleman it was found that his whole property fell into the hands of his half-at-law, the subject of this memoir. Mr Galt instantly executed a deed, fulfilling the intentions of his father.

In 1801 or 2, a newspaper was started at Greenock, and became a ready and appropriate vehicle for the compositions of Mr Galt and his friend Park. Soon after they began to contribute to more distant miscellanies, such as the *Scots Magazine*. Mr Galt mentions

Our daughter Jean she is too young,
All in French garlands;
She cannot bide your flattering tongue,
So adieu to you, my darlings.

The moveable party now again advance, singing:

Be she young, or be she old,
All in French garlands;
It's for a bride she must be sold,
So adieu to you, my darlings.

The mother still refuses her consent—

A bride, a bride she shall not be,
All in French garlands,
Till she go through this world with me,
So adieu to you, my darlings.

There is here a hiatus or gap in our recollection; but, after the reply of the lovers, the maternal party relent in the following romantic terms:

Come back, come back, you courteous knight,
All in French garlands;
Clear up your spurs, and make them bright,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

We are again at a loss for what the lover says; but the stationary row proceed to offer a choice of their daughters, in the following elegant terms:

Smell my lilies, smell my roses,
All in French garlands;
Which of my maidens do ye choose?
And adieu to you, my darlings.

The lover now becomes fastidious in proportion to the concessions of the opposite party, and affects to scruple about the bodily sanity of the young ladies:

Are all your daughters safe and sound?
All in French garlands;
Are all your daughters safe and sound?
And adieu to you, my darlings.

But it would appear he is quite assured by the answer, and marries the daughter Jean accordingly—who has

In every pocket a thousand pound,
All in French garlands;
On every finger a gay gold ring,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

that the newspaper was conducted by an individual so singularly stupid, as to be quite a problem. Mr Galt got an early copy of Campbell's beautiful ode "Hohenlinden," and presented it for insertion in the Greenock Advertiser: it was returned, as not worthy of a place! As he advanced into the full bloom of youth, Mr Galt entirely lost his inebriate character, and became remarkable for that decision, which, whether for good or evil, has ever since characterised him. About the year 1804, having received an insult from a mercantile correspondent, he took upon him to resent it in a very prompt and stern manner, which seems to have rendered his situation at Greenock too unpleasant to be any longer endured. He accordingly went to London, furnished with a vast number of introductory letters, which procured him many dinners, but nothing else; and for six months he appears to have spent his time in indecision as to his future course of life. He at length began a mercantile career in company with one McLauchlan, and for some years prospered considerably. He devoted his extended powers of mind to his profession, and to little else; studied the principles of trade, and wrote treatises on some of the more abstruse parts of them. He read a great deal, and his reading was chiefly of an useful kind. He also studied the world, the ways of men, and the circumstances which affect their fortunes—with what success is shown in the sagacity observable in many of his works.

In the third year of his career in London, Mr Galt was involved by a mercantile correspondent in very serious difficulties, which, notwithstanding that his affairs were otherwise prosperous, involved him in bankruptcy. As he lost no character by this event, he might have gone again into business with good prospects; but it appears that his mind at this time contracted those unsettled habits to which the whole of his alleged misfortunes are to be traced. He was ambitious of a learned profession, and entered at Lincoln's Inn, with a view to the English bar, not reflecting till some time after that he had no connections who could serve him in a legal career. According to himself—"One who conceals himself to be at least equal to his neighbours in energy, is very apt to make a false estimate of the chances of life. He sees that men only get forward by their own talents, and it is not till he has obtained some insight of the world that he discovers, although this be true, yet he is apt to undervalue difficulties by attending too much to that circumstance. At the outset of life there is no profession whatever to which the aid of friends, be the individual's talent what it may, is not essential. If he possess superior ability, he will in time, with the precursor of friendship, make himself distinguished; but if he be only an ordinary person, he will never rise above his first establishment." There may, we think, be too much allowed here for the aid of friendship: the true way, in the most of the ways of life, is to trust only to one's own merits and exertions, and the public appreciation of them. At another place, Mr Galt says—less controversially—"It appeared to me that those destined to rise higher in the world had about them something which indicated their superiority. It could not be described, but every thing about them showed us at once that they panted for a higher element; a second class were quite at their ease, and I concluded that they found themselves in their station; but the third were altogether persons whom an inherent awkwardness marked as out of and above their sphere, to which they were destined to sink." There is great penetration in these few lines.

In the year 1809, Mr Galt resolved to make a tour of the Mediterranean, partly for his health, and partly to while away the time till he should be called to the bar. At Gibraltar he encountered Lord Byron and Mr Hobhouse, in whose company he sailed to Sicily, and whose acquaintance he thus formed. In his autobiography, he states all he can respecting his connection with Byron; but as English periodical literature, for ten years and upwards, has been overflowing with the ridiculous vagaries of that extraordinary individual, we have resolved that this little sheet at least shall be free of him—and we therefore hurry over this part of Mr Galt's life. From Sicily, the subject of our memoir proceeded to Malta, and thence to Greece, where, at Tripolizza, he conceived a scheme for forming a mercantile establishment in the Levant, to counteract the Berlin and Milan decrees of Napoleon. The conception was instantaneous, and seemed at first so promising as almost to turn his brain. After touching at Smyrna, he returned to Malta, where he found Messrs Struthers, Kennedy, and Company, apprised by Mr Kirkman Finlay's house in Glasgow, of a plan similar to his, which had been suggested by one of their partners resident at Vienna. He was astonished at the coincidence, but resolved to wait till the house at Malta should correspond with that at Glasgow respecting his scheme. In the meantime, he proceeded to inspect the coasts of the Grecian Archipelago, and to ascertain the safest route to the borders of Hungary. In going through the Pass of Thermopylae, an armed Albanian came down upon him and his fellow-traveller, demanding money, which being refused, the man snapped a rusty pistol at Mr Galt. The two travellers then rode off in a panic, thinking the assailant a robber, and leaving all their baggage behind. The baggage by and bye came up after them, and they learned, to their great amusement, that the man was only a tollman, demanding about one shilling and ninepence sterling.

After an exploratory expedition to the borders of Hungary, in which he satisfied himself of the practicability of introducing goods into the Continent by this circuitous channel, he returned by Sardinia and Gibraltar to Britain (August 1811), landing first in Ireland. He busied himself for a time in applications to the government, on the subject of his Levant scheme, but found great difficulty in attracting any attention. Meanwhile, he prepared and published a quarto volume descriptive of what he had seen in his travels, being his first avowed work. It was not very favourably received, and has long passed out of notice. He never reaped any good from the project which had occupied his thoughts so much, though it was soon after acted upon to a considerable extent and with advantage to those concerned. Mr Kirkman Finlay proposed to give him a principal share in superintending a mercantile concern established by his house at Gibraltar, and he closed with the offer. At Gibraltar, however, he found himself out of his element: he confesses he never could lay his heart to any business in which the imagination was not engaged. His health became bad, and the concern was ruined by the successes of the Duke of Wellington in Spain. He returned to Britain, where it appears his friends were by no means pleased with his conduct. He was now, at thirty-three years of age, an unconnected adventurer in London. All his exertions in life hitherto appear to have been ineffectual in accumulating for him either money or the confidence of friends. He possessed no regular means of supporting himself, and his health was precarious. Yet this seems to have been the time of all others chosen by our author for encountering the responsibilities of a family. Of the exact date of his marriage (further than that it was a Tuesday), or the name of the lady, we are not informed. For some years after this period, we hear of no exertions made by Mr Galt for his subsistence beyond the composition of a few volumes, none of which, so far as we are aware, were very successful. He published Letters from the Levant in one volume octavo; a Life of Cardinal Wolsey; several minor biographies; and a number of plays; the most of the latter being published in a work styled the Rejected Theatre, which appeared in a series of volumes.

The first decidedly successful appearance which Mr Galt made as an author, was in a series of articles, which appeared in the year 1820, in Blackwood's Magazine, styled "The Ayrshire Legates." In this work, which eventually formed a separate volume, he showed a power of delineating a certain line of Scotch characters, that struck the public mind, especially in Scotland, very forcibly. Sir Walter Scott had already given some admirable pictures; but he had never come so exactly into the very heart of a real Scotch man of the middle ranks, as Mr Galt now did. Mr Blackwood, whose judgment of literary productions is generally acknowledged to be excellent, saw that this was a new vein, and he encouraged Mr Galt in prosecuting it. A volume, written earlier, but for some years neglected, was now published, under the title of "The Annals of the Parish." It was intended by the author as a kind of Scottish Vicar of Wakefield; and it certainly possesses much of the household humour and pathos of its admirable model. About this time, the author had come to Scotland, chiefly with a view to the education of his children; and for some years he lived in Eskgrove House, near Musselburgh, a seat of Sir William Rae, then Lord Advocate for Scotland. The proximity of this residence to Edinburgh was peculiarly convenient, as it enabled him to conduct his publications there with great ease. He now issued in rapid succession *The Provost*, *The Steamboat* (each one volume), *Sir Andrew Wylie*, and *The Entail* (each three volumes), and *The Gathering in the West*, which related to the flocking of the west-country people to Edinburgh at the period of the king's visit. In all of these works, the peculiar vein of Scottish character which Mr Galt had hit upon, formed the main attraction, and their merits were upon the whole handsomely acknowledged by the public. It could only be urged by critics of strictly just taste, that there was an unfortunate coarseness in many of Mr Galt's pictures, and a mean style of moral feeling in many of his characters, which could not justly be considered as a fair representation of the people from whom they professed to be derived. Another series, published by Messrs Oliver and Boyd, consisted of *Ringan Gilhaize*, *The Spawwife*, and *Rothelan*. They fell under the denomination of historical romances, and were not generally deemed happy efforts. Upon the whole, any distinctive merit which Mr Galt possesses as an author, may be said to lie exclusively in his power of describing a home specimen of his countrymen, which he almost always does with truth and effect, though, as intimated, with far too much of the selfish feeling attributed to the character. He generally fails in any higher flight.

From about the year 1824 to 1830, Mr Galt was occupied in the business of acting manager and superintendant of the business of an emigration company in Upper Canada, which required his almost constant residence in that country, and appears to have yielded him a salary of a thousand a-year. A large portion of his book is occupied in the details of his transactions in this capacity, and, according to his own showing, he pushed on the concerns of his employers with a great deal of activity, and no small success. The company, however, did not prosper, and his irritable disposition having afforded them an excuse which

might have otherwise been wanting, he was discharged at the last, in what appears to have been a very harsh manner. The consequence was an embarrassment in Mr Galt's affairs, which obliged him once more to become bankrupt. In London he again commenced the business of an author, and produced in quick succession *Lawrie Todd* (a singularly happy and successful novel), *Southcote*, *Bogle Corbet*, *Stanley Buxton*, and *Iben Erskine*—all of which were in three volumes each—with the *Life of Lord Byron* (written for the National Library), the *Lives of the Players* (2 vols. for the same series), the *Member and the Radical*, political tales in one volume each.

In the midst of these honourable exertions for the support of his family and the discharge of his debts—for both objects seem to have been in his view, and the latter to a certain extent accomplished—he was, in July 1832, struck with paralysis on one side, which has confined him to his room ever since, and left him, as he mournfully expresses it, "three parts dead." Even in this unhappy state, he has contrived to write, or at least to dictate; and though this autobiography, which has been composed under such circumstances, is certainly not a blameless work, it shows that, however his body be affected, his mind still retains its wonted vigour almost entire.

Throughout his narrative, Mr Galt lets out numerous expressions of complaint against individuals and against the world, and endeavours, upon the whole, to convey the impression that he has been what is called "an ill-used man." It would not be humane, and could be attended with no good to himself, to point out to this unfortunate gentleman how apt he is to have been mistaken in this conclusion. We may, however, state as our deliberate impression, after a perusal of his work, that it was hardly possible for any man who went through any thing like the same course of life that he has done, to end with wealth or with comfort. All his exertions since his thirtieth year appear to have been of a desultory and irregular character. He was occasionally in the way of making much money, but he never could long remain in such a position. His own confession, that he never could apply steadily to any employment which did not engage the imagination, must, we fear, be held as an explanation of all his misfortunes, for it is almost equivalent to a declaration that he never could endure any business of a lucrative kind. If a man deliberately prefers the luxury which he experiences in following out all the freaks of his fancy, to the gains of steady plodding industry, it is mere folly to complain that he has not become rich; he could not reasonably expect both rewards. We must at the same time pronounce, that there is an absurdity in the world having enjoyed so much from the writings of this man, and his yet being in distressed circumstances. The remuneration which an author of Mr Galt's degree of merit derives from his labours, bears no proportion to the enjoyment which the public has had in them; and it appears no more than just, that such an individual should experience the public bounty in some shape or other through the medium of the government. Large sums are annually spent upon persons who have no apparent claim but influential connections, while men of genius, who spend their nights and their days, their blood and strength and soul, in instructing and amusing their species, and whose thoughts are to be a capital for the enjoyment of all future ages, perish in poverty and neglect.

We cannot permit this book to pass from our observation without remarking with regret its extraordinary deficiency in dates. We do not recollect having observed in Mr Galt's text more than two dates—that of his birth, and that of his first attack from paralysis. All the rest is a chaos, where the reader can only occasionally make out the period of an incident from the date of a letter occurring thereabouts, or some other such contingent hint. The consequence is, that Mr Galt's youth and middle age—all the facts of his life, in short—are completely jumbled, and lose a great deal of their character. In the above sketch, the reader would be equally at a loss, if we had not been able, from our own knowledge, to supply two or three of the more essential dates. Some people have a habitual contempt for dates, as if they were only of use to persons of a formal and artificial cast of mind. But how events can be arranged in the mind of any one by other means, how they can otherwise be intelligible, is more than we can comprehend. In reality, a mind that is distinct about events, or attaches any value to them, must retain the date also, for the mere purpose of showing the relation of those events to others; and no person can pretend to know any thing of either history or biography, who is not also somewhat skilled in chronology. To our mind, an event without a date is the most meaningless thing in the world; and any book which professes to deal in the one without attending to the other, we look upon as little better than a common fiction.

SMOKING AND SNUFF-TAKING.

AMONG the various follies which we have thought it necessary to hold up to general ridicule and reproach, are the smoking of tobacco and snuff-taking, two pretended luxuries, if not supposed to be necessities of life, of the most vicious nature, as regards both their expensiveness and their effects on the constitution. It is astonishing to see the silliness of mankind—we

would say of many really intelligent people—in beginning an indulgence in these intemperate habits, and continuing in them till they had injured their personal appearance, and hurt their digestive organs. We have usually remarked that young men take to tobacco and snuff more from an idea of doing what they imagine to be manful, than of increasing their comforts. Smoking has an air of listless independence about it that shows well off; and there is doubtless a deal of agreeable fiddle-faddle in the opening, and shutting, and handing about of a neat snuff-box. When conversation lags for want of intellect or invention, snuffing fills up the intervening pauses, and the mutual exchange of a pinch is supposed to be a cement of friendship fully as binding as the eating of salt together used to be in the early ages of civilization. Many pretend that tobacco and snuff are beneficial—that they are taken medicinally for the health. This is exceedingly amusing. "The observations we frequently hear (says the author of a sensibly written tract on the subject) of their being used on account of headaches and stomach complaints, are mere attempts to justify or apologize for the habit. Nay, so far from contributing to health, they destroy it. And, accordingly, it was lately stated in the newspapers, that an eminent physician in the United States imputed the unhealthy condition of the district where he practised, to the common use of cigars."

It is no less evident that these articles cannot contribute to your happiness. What happiness can arise from creating to yourselves restless, craving, unnatural appetites, which are incessantly demanding gratification? The great art of happiness is not to multiply your appetites, but to have yourselves exempted from them; and there appears a general conviction of the hollow and deceitful nature of the satisfaction which snuff and tobacco confer on their votaries; for it is well known that few ever acquired the habit of using them, without repenting it, supposing even that they were in easy circumstances. Very few indeed, who have contracted the habit, will be found to defend it. They will perhaps allege that there is something peculiar in their cases which renders it advisable, and that there might be danger in dropping it. But they will at the same time allow that it is highly proper to warn others against such habits; and this is granting in the fullest manner their unfortunate tendency, and the folly of contracting them. I have heard a saying of a late eccentric judge in our supreme courts, that if he had a thousand noses, he would give them all snuff. A more severe satire could not be pronounced on the habit. Had this eccentric character considered duly, he would have perceived that, having a thousand such members to gratify, he would have required several active assistants to quiet his clamorous appetites, and keep them in some measure of good humour.

While these articles confer neither health nor happiness, let us attend to what they cost immense numbers of deluded people throughout the nation. The duties paid on tobacco in Great Britain and Ireland for 1829, were stated to be two millions eight hundred and fifty-nine thousand pounds. Add to this the cost of production, the expenses of freight, the profits of the manufacturer, wholesale merchant, and retailer, and the whole will amount to an annual sum, which, in the course of fourscore years, would almost pay off the national debt. And all this is of course paid by the consumer. The proportion of duty for Scotland in 1829 was £273,000. Suppose £400,000 paid for the article by the consumers, which is probably too low a calculation, and that there are a thousand parishes, being a few more than the actual number; this gives £400 as the average for each parish. Such is the annual sum paid for an article of luxury, the using which arises from a mere idle habit, and which cannot be shown to be beneficial in any shape whatever.

I have often been amused at the various reasons assigned for this debasing habit. Sometimes a defluxion was wanted from the nose; snuff, of course, exactly fitted the case. Or there was an obstruction in the upper part of the smelling functionary, which snuff cleverly removed. There was a weakness in the eyes, and snuff strengthened them; they were arid, and lacked moisture; nothing in such a case like snuff. Then headaches, qualms, vertigo, all were found to yield to this potent magician. While snuff guarded the upper regions, I found that tobacco was no less vigilant in watching over the safety of the lower. Here, too, a defluxion was wanted; tobacco brought off all the superfluous moisture that was deluging the stomach. The process of digestion did not go on satisfactorily; tobacco corrected the bad qualities of the saliva and gastric juice, and down went the whole contents careering. The bile was overflowing; now, every person knows that the smoke or juice of tobacco makes the troublesome fellow keep within his banks. The toothache, too, I found, was made to yield without a struggle. Who does not know that the tooth-ach proceeds from small worms that breed in decaying teeth? Tobacco makes these give up the ghost with a vengeance; while at the same time it enamels the grinders with a beautiful black.

There are reasons assigned for the habit of using tobacco, which may require a more serious answer. Some defend it on the ground of tobacco being an important article of commerce, and a source of public revenue. There is an immense capital, and much shipping employed in the trade. Many thousands of eminent merchants are supported and enriched by it.

Small dealers in the article abound in every parish. Why should so many have their gains diminished, and the means of their subsistence taken from them? Now, the same argument may be used against the diminution of the trade in spirits. And the question that comes to be resolved is this: whether vice and misery should be encouraged and multiplied through the kingdom, in order to furnish sources of public revenue, and to enrich planters, ship-owners, innkeepers, and shopkeepers? It would be no great consolation to the poor inhabitants of any district, to tell them, that, by expending their money on spirits, snuff, and tobacco, instead of employing it in purchasing food and clothing, they are upholding the revenue and commerce of the country, and enriching planters, distillers, and others. If the capital of a country cannot be profitably employed in these articles, it will find its way into other channels.

As an argument for the use of tobacco, I have heard it alleged, that if the lower classes should leave off these habits, they might adopt some equally bad, or worse. Now, I am utterly at a loss to perceive how this will follow in the least. Tobacco and snuff have not been used in this kingdom above 250 years. What bad habits were our ancestors addicted to in place of this, antecedently to that period? Suppose a parish to contain a thousand inhabitants, and that one hundred use snuff and tobacco—What bad habit are the other nine hundred addicted to, from which this one hundred are free?

I have all along characterised the habit of using snuff and tobacco as degrading and debasing. There are few who have not observed the debasing effects proceeding from the use of these articles among the lower ranks. Women who smoke have usually a disgusting appearance, from their want of attention to cleanliness. And so commonly does this take place, that, as soon as one of the younger generation commences the practice, she straightway becomes a slattern, and grows regardless about her looks."

In short, concludes this writer, "with respect to such as have acquired the habit, it surely deserves their consideration, whether it may not be worth while, by submitting to some self-denial, and some uneasy feelings, for a month or two, to obtain freedom from a vile debasing slavery during the rest of their lives."

THE COCOA-NUT TREE.

THE cocoa or palm tree is one of the most valuable natural products of eastern countries, and is so useful in various ways, that, if extirpated, the warm regions of Hindoostan, and adjacent Indian islands, would barely be habitable by human beings. The cocoa, or cocoa-nut tree, to the extent of five varieties, is indigenous to the island of Ceylon; but it is seldom if ever found to that number of varieties in the same plantation, except in the vicinity of a Budhoo temple of some importance. The first variety is the king cocoa-nut, which is of a bright orange colour, and it is usually presented as a compliment by the priests to respectable Europeans, whose curiosity may have induced a visit to the shrine of Budhoo. The next in beauty is also of a bright orange colour, but of a more spherical shape; and the third is of a pale yellow, and rather heart-shaped. The fourth is the common cocoa-nut, of which many millions are annually exported to Europe. The fifth is of a dwarf size, not larger than a turkey's egg.

Cocoa-nuts are planted when ripe, and appear above the ground in three months; in about four years the trees have attained their height, and put forth blossoms. In twelve months after this, the trees bear fruit, which they continue to do for sixty years, when the property of bearing gradually ceases. The number of nuts in a bunch or cluster seldom exceeds from fifteen to twenty good nuts; and in favourable sandy situations the tree will admit of the fruit being gathered four or five times in the course of a year.

Cocoas furnish meat and drink, and are otherwise extensively useful to the Singalese, or natives of Ceylon. When the nut is fully ripe, its kernel is ground down, and water being poured on it, a white pulpy substance is produced, which, with rice, form the principal and best food of all classes of natives, from the chief to the day-labourer; and, when accustomed to them, Europeans of all ranks soon grow partial to a diet, which is not only agreeable to the palate, but light and wholesome to the constitution. The beverage which the green cocoa-nut affords is most delicious and cooling. The inside taken when quartered, may be appropriately termed a vegetable blanc-mange; in which state it may be eaten with a spoon, there being no difficulty whatever in removing the pulp from the shell. The addition of Madeira wine, with a few drops of lime juice, and a little sugar and nutmeg, so completely disguises it, that scarcely one person in a hundred would believe it to be a vegetable production.

The cocoa-nut tree yields another species of liquid, equally delicious and refreshing, called palm-wine, or toddy. Two months after the blossoming of the tree, the capsulated flower is first tied, to prevent its expansion, and then cut, so as to allow the juice to exude drop by drop. A supply is yielded morning and

evening, the flower being cut a little every day. Europeans prefer toddy before sunrise, when it is a cool, delicious, and particularly wholesome beverage, acting as a gentle aperient; but the natives prefer it after fermentation has commenced, which takes place in about three hours. In that state, bread-bakers use it as yeast, for which it does admirably, the bread which is made from it being remarkably light and good. The lower classes of Singalese often intoxicate themselves with fermented toddy during the hottest parts of the day, when they may be seen in the neighbourhood of the toddy-shops, squatted on a log of wood, or on the bottom of an inverted canoe, in the full enjoyment of this vicious indulgence.

The next thing that the cocoa-nut tree yields is arrack or rack. This is a distillation of fermented toddy, one hundred gallons of which produce twenty-five of arrack. This spirit, when new, is considered injurious to the constitution; but after it has been kept some years, it becomes one of the wholesomest that can be made use of.

A recital of the duties of the cocoa-nut tree is yet far from being finished. Besides the foregoing products, it furnishes a species of honey and sugar. Eight gallons of sweet newly-drawn toddy, boiled over a slow fire, yield two gallons of a very luscious liquid called honey; which quantity being again boiled, a coarse brown sugar called jagger, which is in general use by the natives, is the product. In manufacturing jagger, it is formed into round cakes or buns, dried in the smoke of the huts, and, being tied in the dead leaves of the banana, is then ready to be kept for domestic use or for exportation.

The next article which the cocoa-nut tree produces is vinegar, which is made in a very simple manner from the toddy. The required quantity of toddy is collected in dry weather, put into jars, and well covered. After a month, the contents are strained, and replaced in the same jars, with the addition of a little Chili pepper, and some other hot spices. At the expiration of a month or five weeks, it becomes very excellent vinegar, nearly equal to European, for pickles, fumigation, and other purposes.

The next valuable product of the cocoa-nut tree is oil, of which there are different ways of manufacturing. The Singalese process is simple. Ripe cocoanuts removed from the shell are pounded in a large mortar, and having been taken out and pressed, the liquid is boiled over a slow fire; the oil which floats on the top being skimmed off, is subsequently boiled by itself. Two quarts of oil will be the product of fourteen or fifteen cocoanuts. When fresh, it is used in cookery, and is excellent. Cocoa-nut oil is burnt in all houses, from that of the governor to the coolie or labourer. It is also used as an ointment for the body and the hair; and the refuse from which it has been expressed, makes oil-cake for the fattening of pigs, poultry, and cattle.

This is not all the uses of the cocoa-nut. The liquid from it in a green state is used as a glue by plasterers in their white and other washes, for houses, verandahs, pillars, &c. The shells of the green nuts, when pared thin, are used as lanterns or lamps for illuminating roads and trees; also for ladles, skimmers, spoons; for making lampblacks, and, when broken, they serve for fuel. The outer shells or husks, by steeping, furnish a fibrous matter, from which either large ropes or small cords may be manufactured as good as if made from hemp; also brushes, mats, and bags. The leaves of the tree are made into excellent baskets for the conveyance of fruits and other articles, and, when prepared in a particular manner, are used as torches by the natives. When the tree is in full leaf, it affords a delightful retreat beneath its shade from the heat of the sun; and the branches of this truly valuable tree, on being split, furnish a covering for houses and huts, as well as materials for many household articles; even the latches of the doors are made from the cocoa-nut tree. The branches also afford excellent stakes for the fencing of fields.

We have now to exhibit the cocoa-nut tree in quite a different character. It is the druggist of the Indians, and furnishes medicines for the cure of their diseases. A decoction drawn from the root is considered by the native doctors so efficacious in intermittent fevers as to be almost invariably employed by them. As a gargle, it removes complaints of the mouth and throat. With fish oil, the expressed juice of the leaves is a sovereign remedy in cases of hemorrhoids. In ophthalmic complaints, the external application of the expressed juice of the nut, mixed with new milk, mitigates, if it does not entirely remove, inflammation. The expressed juice of the flower, mixed with new milk, and taken in small quantities, affords almost immediate relief, and if persevered in, a cure, in the debilitating complaints of hot climates. The bark affords an oil which cures diseases or eruptions of the skin. The shell reduced to charcoal is used as an excellent dentifrice or tooth-powder, and the water of the green nut is the best of all cosmetics for clearing the skin from wrinkles.

Such are the uses and virtues of the cocoa-nut tree, which has apparently been bestowed by the hands of a beneficent Providence for the use and happiness of the natives of tropical climates.*

* This article is the substance of a pamphlet, entitled "A Treatise on the Cocoa-Nut Tree," &c., by a Fellow of the Linnean and Horticultural Societies, many years resident in Ceylon. London, 1831.

Column for Cottagers.

PERSONS in the humbler walks of life in the country have, in many instances, much spare time on their hands which they do not well know how to occupy with useful employment. After attending to their ordinary labour, and perhaps cultivating their gardens, and looking after a cow or a pig, they find little else to do, and may be induced to spend a period of their existence in listless idleness. But however profitless and discreditable it is to be idle, persons in the situation we mention can hardly be blamed. They are most likely willing to keep their minds and bodies in recreative employment, provided they knew how to set about it with a feasible prospect of remuneration. Now, we are going to put in their way a plan proposed by Cobbett, in his *Cottage Economy*, for the exercise of their industry, which has already been tried with great advantage in Orkney, where an immense number of individuals partially or wholly support themselves by it, and which may be pursued in any part of the United Kingdom. It consists of the cultivation and manufacture of grass or straw, for plat, used in making bonnets of the Leghorn species. "The cutting, the bleaching, the sorting, and the platting of straw (says this ingenious writer, who has the credit of introducing the process into this country), seem to be, of all employments, the best suited to the wives and children of country labourers; and the discovery which I have made, as to the means of obtaining the necessary materials, will enable them to enter at once upon that employment. Before I proceed to give my directions relative to the performance of this sort of labour, I shall give a sort of history of the discovery to which I have just alluded:—

The practice of making hats, bonnets, and other things, of straw, is perhaps of very ancient date; but, not to waste time in fruitless inquiries, it is very well known that for many years past straw coverings for the head have been greatly in use in England, in America, and indeed in almost all the countries that we know much of. In this country the manufacture was, only a few years ago, very flourishing; but it has now greatly declined, and has left in poverty and misery those whom it once well fed and clothed.

The cause of this change has been, the importation of the straw hats and bonnets from Italy, greatly superior, in durability and beauty, to those made in England. The plat made in England was made of the straw of ripened grain. It was in general split; but the main circumstance was, that it was made of the straw of ripened grain; while the Italian plat was made of the straw of grain or grass cut green. Now, the straw of ripened grain or grass is brittle, or rather rotten. It dies while standing, and, in point of toughness, the difference between it and straw from plants cut green is much about the same as the difference between a stick that has died on the tree, and one that has been cut from the tree. But besides the difference in point of toughness, strength, and durability, there was the difference in beauty. The colour of the Italian plat was better; the plat was brighter; and the Italian straws being small whole straws, instead of small straws made by the splitting of large ones, there was a roundness in them, that gave light and shade to the plat, which could not be given by our flat bits of straw.

It seems odd that nobody should have set to work to find out how the Italians came by this fine straw. The importation of these Italian articles was chiefly from the port of Leghorn; and, therefore, the bonnets imported were called Leghorn bonnets. The straw manufacturers in this country seem to have made no effort to resist this invasion from Leghorn. And, which is very curious, the Leghorn straw has now begun to be imported, and to be platted in this country; so that we had hands to plat as well as the Italians. All that we wanted was the same kind of straw that the Italians had: and it is truly wonderful, that these importations from Leghorn should have gone on increasing, year after year, and our domestic manufacture dwindling away at a like pace, without there having been any inquiry relative to the way in which the Italians got their straw! Strange that we should have imported even straw from Italy, without inquiring whether similar straw could not be got in England! There really seems to have been an opinion that England could no more produce this straw than it could produce the sugar-cane.

Things were in this state, when, in 1821, a Miss Woodhouse, a farmer's daughter in Connecticut, sent a straw-bonnet of her own making to the Society of Arts in London. This bonnet, superior in fineness and beauty to any thing of the kind that had come from Leghorn, the maker stated to consist of the straw of a sort of grass, of which she sent, along with the bonnet, some of the seeds. The question was, then, would these precious seeds grow and produce plants in perfection in England? A large quantity of the seed had not been sent; and it was therefore, by a member of the society, thought desirable to get, with as little delay as possible, a considerable quantity of the seed.

It was in this stage of the affair that my attention was called to it. The member just alluded to applied to me to get the seed from America. I was of

opinion that there could be no sort of grass in Connecticut, that would not, and that did not grow and flourish in England. My son James, who was then at New York, had instructions from me, in June 1821, to go to Miss Woodhouse, and to send me home an account of the matter. In September, the same year, I heard from him, who sent me an account of the cutting and bleaching, and also a specimen of the plat and of the grass of Connecticut. Miss Woodhouse had told the Society of Arts, that the grass she used was the *Poa pratensis*. This is the smooth-stalked meadow-grass; so that it was quite useless to send for seed. It was clear that we had grass enough in England, if we could but make it into straw as handsome as that of Italy.

I made my experiments, and, in short, I proved to demonstration that we had not only the plants, but the sun also, necessary for the making of straw, yielding in no respect to that of America or of Italy. I think that, upon the whole, we have greatly the advantage of those countries; for grass is more abundant in this country than in any other. It flourishes here more than in any other country. It is here in a greater variety of sorts; and for fineness in point of size, there is no part of the world which can equal what might be obtained from some of our downs, merely by keeping the land ungrazed till the month of July. When I had obtained the straw, I got some of it made into plat. One piece of this plat was equal in point of colour, and superior in point of fineness, even to the plat of the bonnet of Miss Woodhouse.

Cobbett next describes the process of cutting and bleaching the grass:—"First, as to the season of the year, all the straw, except that of one sort of couch-grass, and the long coppice-grass, which two were got in Sussex, were got from grass cut in Hertfordshire on the 21st of June. A grass headland, in a wheat field, had been mowed during the forepart of the day; and in the afternoon I went and took a handful here and a handful there out of the swaths. When I had collected as much as I could well carry, I took it to my friend's house, and proceeded to prepare it for bleaching, according to the information sent me from America by my son; that is to say, I put my grass into a shallow tub, put boiling water upon it until it was covered by the water, let it remain in that state for ten minutes, then took it out, and laid it very thinly on a closely mowed lawn in a garden. But I should observe, that, before I put the grass into the tub, I tied it up in small bundles, or sheaves, each bundle being about six inches through at the butt-end. This was necessary, in order to be able to take the grass, at the end of ten minutes, out of the water, without throwing it into a confused mixture as to tops and tails. Being tied up in little bundles, I could easily, with a prong, take it out of the hot water. The bundles were put into a large wicker basket, carried to the lawn in the garden, and there taken out, one by one, and laid in swaths as before mentioned.

It was laid very thinly; almost might I say, that no stalk of grass covered another. The swaths were turned once a-day. The bleaching was completed at the end of seven days from the time of scalding and laying out. June is a fine month. The grass was, as it happened, cut on the longest day in the year; and, the weather was remarkably fine and clear. But the grass which I afterwards cut in Sussex was cut the first week in August.

The part of the straw used for platting is that part of the stalk which is above the upper joint; that part which is between the upper joint and the seed-branched. This part is taken out, and the rest of the straw thrown away. But the whole plant must be cut and bleached; because, if you were to take off, when green, the part above described, that part would wither up next to nothing. This part must die in company with the whole plants, and be separated from the other parts after the bleaching has been performed.

The time of cutting must vary with the seasons, the situation, and the sort of grass. The grass which I got in Hertfordshire, than which nothing can, I think, be more beautiful, was, when cut, generally in bloom; just in bloom. The wheat was in full bloom; so that a good time for getting grass may be considered to be that when the wheat is in bloom. When I cut the grass in Sussex, the wheat was ripe, for reaping had begun; but that grass is of a very backward sort, and, besides, grew in the shade amongst coppice-wood and under trees, which stood pretty thick.

As to the sorts of grass, I have to observe generally, that in proportion as the colour of the grass is deep—that is to say, getting further from the yellow, and nearer to the blue—it is of a deep and dead yellow when it becomes straw. Those kinds of grass are best, which are, in point of colour, nearest to that of wheat, which is a fresh pale green. Another thing is, the quality of the straw as to pliancy and toughness. Experience must be our guide here."

He next informs us that purple melica grass, florin grass, ray grass, yellow oat grass, crested dog's-tail, grass, sweet-scented vernal grass, and brown bent grass, are those to be used in preparing to make straw plat; and then proceeds—"As it may be useful to speak of the expense of cutting and bleaching, I shall trouble you with a few words relating to it. If there were a field of ray-grass, of crested dog's-tail, or any other good sort, and nothing else growing with it, the expense of cutting would be very little indeed, seeing that the scythe or reep-hook would do the business at a great rate. Doubtless there will be such fields; but

even if the grass have to be cut by the handful, my opinion is, that the expense of cutting and bleaching would not exceed fourpence for straw enough to make a large bonnet. I should be willing to contract to supply straw, at this rate, for half a million of bonnets. The scalding must constitute a considerable part of the expense, because there must be fresh water for every parcel of grass that you put in the tub. When water has scalded one parcel of cold grass, it will not scald another parcel. Besides, the scalding draws out the sweet matter of the grass, and makes the water the colour of that horrible stuff called London porter.

I cannot, in concluding these communications, refrain from making an observation or two on the consequences likely to arise out of these inquiries. The manufacture is alone of considerable magnitude. Not less than about five millions of persons in this kingdom have a dress which consists partly of manufactured straw; and a large part, and all the most expensive part, of the articles thus used, now come from abroad. Notwithstanding all this, if the manufacture were of a description to require, in order to give it success, the collecting of the manufacturers together in great numbers, I should, however great the wealth that it might promise, never have done any thing to promote its establishment. The contrary is, happily, the case: here all is not only performed by hand, but by hand singly, without any combination of hands. Here there is no power of machinery or of chemistry wanted. All is performed out in the open fields, or sitting in the cottage. There wants no coal mines and no rivers to assist; no water-powers nor powers of fire. No part of the kingdom is unfit for the business. Every where there are grass, water, sun, and women and children's fingers; and these are all that are wanted. But the great thing of all is this: that, to obtain the materials for the making of this article of dress, at once so gay, so useful, and in some cases so expensive, there requires not a penny of capital. Many of the labourers now make their own straw hats to wear in summer. Poor rotten things, made out of the straw of ripened grain. With what satisfaction will they learn that straw, twenty times as durable, to say nothing of the beauty, is to be got from every hedge! In short, when the people are well and clearly informed of the facts which I have adduced, it is next to impossible that the manufacture should not become general throughout the country. In every labourer's house a pot of water can be boiled. What labourer's wife cannot, in the summer months, find time to cut and bleach grass enough to give her and her children work for a part of the winter! There is no necessity for all to be platters; some may cut and bleach only; others may prepare the straw; and, doubtless, as the farmers in Hertfordshire now sell their straw to the platters, grass collectors and bleachers and preparers would do the same; so that there is scarcely any country labourer's family that might not derive some advantage from this discovery."

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF BIRDS.

The geographical distribution of the various races of created beings has excited considerable interest, and a mass of facts have been collected, which go far to prove that it is regulated by certain laws, chiefly dependent upon the conjoined influence of climate and temperature. Birds are equally subject to those rules, as might be expected from their more extended locomotive powers, their ranges are wider, and some groups and species are more generally spread over the world than those beings which require the assistance of a solid medium to transport themselves from place to place. Instances of this kind may be given in one of two examples. The great families of the falcons, pigeons, and swallows, are universally diffused; parrots are found in every quarter of the world, except Europe; and woodpeckers are wanting only to New Holland. The peregrine falcon, so renowned in a noble but nearly forgotten sport, has its free range over the greater part of Europe, America, and Greenland, and has been sent from the distant continent of New Holland; the short-eared owl is common to Europe, Siberia, and the neighbourhood of Canton, in China; the common magpie extends over Europe, has been sent from the Himalayan range in India, and reaches to the cold regions of North America; while specimens of the glassy ibis have reached this country from each of the four quarters of the world, besides from many of its far distant insulated lands.—*Naturalist's Library.*

SUNDAY AT CALCUTTA.

Forty years ago, little or no attention was paid to the Sabbath in Calcutta, so much so that there seemed hardly any difference betwixt Sunday and the other days of the week. Only one outward symbol was exhibited to assure people that it was the day of rest. "Oh," would one person say to another, "I see this is Sunday—the flag is hoisted at Fort William."

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